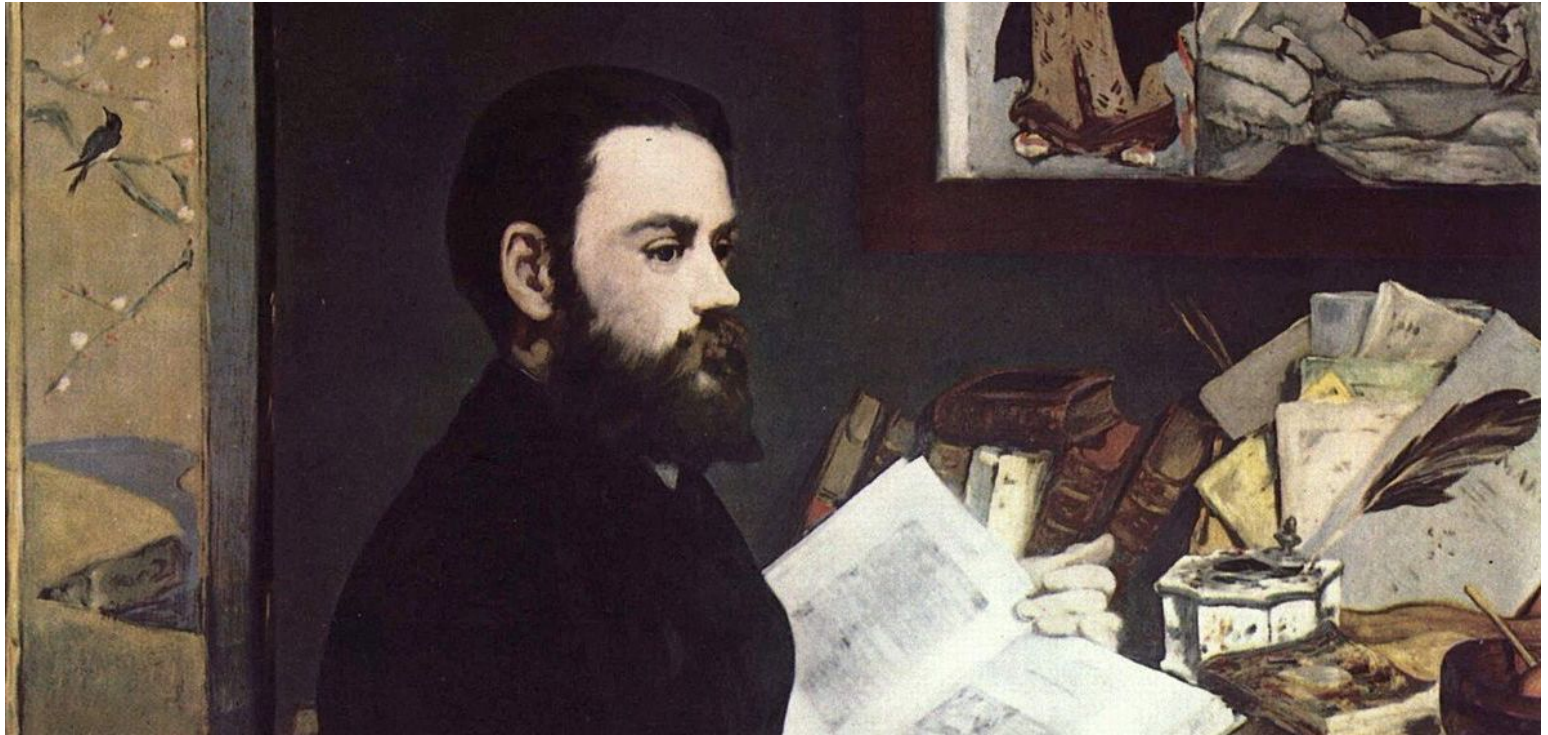


Course Syllabus

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How can you articulate what you are thinking and feeling when looking at art, and how do you make your perspective convincing? Where does interpretation start, and under what circumstances does it become criticism? Some of the most influential modern and contemporary writers have grappled with these questions in reference to art of their time. In this seminar, you too will think through challenges of visual interpretation and develop a method for viewing artworks in private and public spaces. We will dedicate class sessions to viewing artworks in galleries, on Rice campus, and in artists' studios, as well as attend lectures by prominent art critics. As the culmination of this course, you will work together to design and edit your own journals of art criticism compiled from essays and reviews that you write in the first half of the semester.

Note: In the course of this semester, you may encounter images that you find disturbing. Any artwork can be an opportunity for debate, discussion, and disagreement, and free expression is encouraged.

First-Year Writing-Intensive Seminar (FWIS) [objectives \(http://pwc.rice.edu/fwis/\)](http://pwc.rice.edu/fwis/) :

By taking this course, students will:

- Enhance their understanding of the central place of writing and communication in the learning process and in academic life.

- Learn strategies for analyzing, synthesizing, and responding to college-level readings.
- Improve their ability to communicate correctly and effectively in writing and in speech, taking into account audience and purpose.
- Become comfortable with writing as a process and learn strategies— for instance, prewriting, outlining, and revision— for working through that process.
- Learn appropriate use of the work of others and, where necessary, specific practices of citation.
- Learn to articulate oral arguments and to respond productively to arguments of others in formal presentations and in class discussion.

Responsibilities:

Learning to write art criticism requires a good-faith effort and accountability to a community of artists and art critics. Therefore, I have certain expectations for your behavior and work habits in this course. As aspiring art critics, you must:

- Attend all classes even when they convene off-campus.
- Participate conscientiously in seminar discussions. Listen to your classmates and contribute.
- Finish all reading assignments for the day they are due.

Writing Assignments:

The most important component of this class is the cultivation of your writing practice leading up to the creation of your own art journal. You will write one review of a gallery exhibition and one essay on an art related topic in the first half of the semester. These texts will be combined with those of your classmates to create a new art journal of your own design. As a group, you will create the concept for a journal and revise and repurpose your reviews and essays to fit the journal's format and theme. The finalized journals will be presented before a professional publisher at the end of the semester.

To develop critical reading skills, you will also summarize the main points of significant art criticism in a series of "precis" and write a research paper on an existing art journal citing a variety of secondary sources.

Grading:

Grades will be entered into Canvas as assignments are completed in order for you to check the status of your grade throughout the semester

Cultivating a Writing Practice =30%

Free writing (2 essays, 250 words each) 2%

Formal Analysis presentation (5 to 8 min in-class) 2%

Pitch for Gallery Review (150 word formal email) 2%

Gallery Review (500 word draft about an exhibition) 2%

Revised Gallery Review (500 word final copy)10%

Pitch for Essay (150 word formal email) 2%

Extended Essay (500 word text on art related topic)10%

Capstone Project: Creating an Art Journal= 38%

Workshop (peer-editing of journals) 8%

Journal Launch (15 minute group presentation)10%

Final Journals (final version of assembled texts)20%

Reading Art Criticism = 32%

Participation (see rubric) 10%

Precis (5 summaries of course readings, 250 words ea.) 10%

Research Paper (2000 words, sources cited) 10%

Oral Presentation of Research (5 to 8 min in-class) 2%

Assignment Submission:

Our course will use Canvas as the main point of communication where the syllabus, readings, and your grade can be found. All assignments are to be submitted through Canvas before class on the date on which they are due.

During your first year at Rice, you may find it challenging to balance challenging courses and extracurricular activities. In recognition of the fact that time management is a learning process, you may submit one written assignment up to two days late with no grading penalty. Any additional assignments that are turned in late will have 10% of the grade deducted for every day after the due date up to 50% off your assignment grade.

Any assignments that are late due to medical conditions or other urgent causes will not be penalized if accompanied by documentation and a formal letter from a college master.

Honor Code (http://honor.rice.edu/files/2010/11/Constitution_Edited-Mar-2017-176iopt.pdf) :

One of the purposes of FWIS is to help new students understand the Rice Honor Code and, more explicitly, to teach students the rules of paraphrasing and scholarly attribution, and the appropriate uses of different types of evidence. Accordingly, FWIS instructors take an educational approach to transgressions of these rules and respond to errors in these areas as issues for grading and opportunities to correct errors, rather than as instances of academic dishonesty. At the same time, all FWIS instructors retain the authority to treat instances of repeat or egregious violations as matters for the attention of the Rice Honor Council.

In this course, students are expected to do the actual writing of assignments on their own, with no outside help from anyone else. However, students are strongly encouraged to collaborate on all other aspects of their coursework; including discussing assignments, reading each other's work, and making suggestions for editing and revision.

Disability Accommodations:

Any student with a documented disability seeking academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Students with disabilities will need to contact [Disability Support Services \(https://dss.rice.edu\)](https://dss.rice.edu) in the Allen Center.

Feedback on your Writing:

You are encouraged to make appointments with the peer consultants at the Center for Written, Oral, and Visual Communication for your assignments in this course. These consultants do not proofread or edit your work, but they will provide feedback on topics such as the organization of your paper or presentation, the coherence of your argument, appropriate sentence structure, and consistent grammatical errors. You can make an appointment at the Center's website— [https://cwovc.rice.edu \(https://cwovc.rice.edu\)](https://cwovc.rice.edu).

Questions and Events:

Class discussion will be organized around central questions that will prepare you to read and write art

criticism.

NOTE THAT SOME CLASSES WILL BE HELD OFF-CAMPUS. ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.

Tuesday, January 9 **Introduction**

Site visit to Michael Heizer, 45°, 90°, 180° (1984)

Thursday, January 11 **What do you love, and what do you hate?**

In-Class Reading: Jules Prown, Mind in Matter (1982)

Tuesday, January 16 **How do you write a formal analysis of an artwork?**

Short presentations

Thursday, January 18 **How do you find the right word to describe an artwork?**

In-Class Reading: John Ruskin, Modern Painters (1834)

Tuesday, January 23 Visit to Inman Gallery, 3901 Main Street

Thursday, January 25 **How to do an effective peer-review?**

Bring a hard copy of the draft of your review to class. We will practice a peer-review together.

Tuesday, January 30 **What is art?**

Thursday, February 1 **How to take advantage of a press preview?**

Site visit to Moody Center for the Arts

Tuesday, February 6 **What is a little criticism amongst friends?**

Thursday, February 8 **NO CLASS**

Tuesday, February 13 **How can we define the avant-garde?**

Thursday, February 15 **What is the effect of reproduction on artworks?**

Tuesday, February 20 **What is the problem with formalism?**

In-Class Reading: John Yao, Please Wait By the Coatroom (1988)

Thursday, February 22 **How to give an effective presentation?**

Guest speaker: Dr. Elizabeth Festa, Associate Director of the CWOVC

Tuesday, February 27 **Why have there been no great women artists?**

Thursday, March 1 Kellie Jones lecture at Rice

Tuesday, March 6 **Can we talk about primitivism?**

Read Thomas McEvilley essay for class discussion.

Thursday, March 8 Visit to the Turrell skyspace on Rice campus

Tuesday, March 13 - NO CLASS

Thursday, March 15 - NO CLASS

Tuesday, March 20 **Where is art criticism today?**

In-Class Reading: James Elkins, Writing without Readers (2003)

Thursday, March 22 **What is conceptual art?**

Read Jack Burnham essay for class discussion.

Tuesday, March 27 **What is the distinctive voice of various critics and publications?**

Presentation of Research Papers

Thursday, March 29 **Who can be an artist, and who can be an art critic?**

Read Cornel West essay for class discussion.

Tuesday, April 3 **What is postmodernism?**

Read Craig Owens essay for class discussion.

Thursday, April 5 Visit with Natasha Bowdoin at Bermac Studios

Tuesday, April 10 **Peer Editing Workshop**

Thursday, April 12 Yesomi Umolu lecture at MFAH

Tuesday, April 17 **Practice 15 minute presentations for journal launch**

Thursday, April 19 **Journal launch for Rainey Knudson, Founder and Publisher of *Glasstire***

Images:

Images discussed in class can be found at <http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.rice.edu/group/ee78a23c-da9d-4096-9403-be05220213b9?token=HDz07tFcQlan7mSMNUUWmA>

(<http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.rice.edu/group/ee78a23c-da9d-4096-9403-be05220213b9?token=HDz07tFcQlan7mSMNUUWmA>)

Absence Policy, as stated at https://ga.rice.edu/UG_attendance/ (https://ga.rice.edu/UG_attendance/)

“Students are expected to attend all scheduled activities for all of the classes for which they are registered during the entire course of the academic semester for which they are enrolled. The academic calendar indicates normal class days, recesses, and holidays. . .

The university understands that students participating in university-sponsored extracurricular activities may, on rare occasions, need to miss a class session during the semester. As a matter of course, students should inform their instructors in advance of absences resulting from participation in university-sponsored activities. . .

Absences for activities other than university-sponsored events may be negotiated on an informal basis between the student and the faculty member. Alternatively, absences may be formally excused on a case-by-case basis if a petition explaining the nature of the event, accompanied by suitable documentation, is submitted to the Committee on Examinations and Standing at least two weeks before the event.”

Course Summary:

Date	Details	
Thu Jan 11, 2018	 Free Writing Exercise (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59026)	due by 10:50am
Tue Jan 16, 2018	 From Description to Deduction (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59231)	due by 10:50am
Thu Jan 18, 2018	 Pitch for a Gallery Exhibition Review (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59232)	due by 10:50am
Tue Jan 23, 2018	 Visit to Inman Gallery (https://canvas.rice.edu/calendar?)	10:50am to 12:05pm

[event_id=14808&include_contexts=course_9696\)](#)

Thu Jan 25, 2018	 Gallery Exhibition Review for Rice Thresher (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59233)	due by 10:50am
Tue Jan 30, 2018	 Précis of Leo Tolstoy, What is Art? (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59236)	due by 10:50am
Thu Feb 1, 2018	 Revised Gallery Exhibition Review (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59234)	due by 10:50am
Tue Feb 6, 2018	 Précis of Gertrude Stein, Matisse and Picasso (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59239)	due by 10:50am
Tue Feb 13, 2018	 Précis of Clement Greenberg, Avant-Garde and Kitsch (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59241)	due by 10:50am
Thu Feb 15, 2018	 Précis of Walter Benjamin, Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59242)	due by 10:50am
Tue Feb 20, 2018	 Pitch for an Extended Essay (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59243)	due by 10:50am
Tue Feb 27, 2018	 Précis of Linda Nochlin, Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59244)	due by 10:50am
Thu Mar 1, 2018	 Kellie Jones lecture (https://canvas.rice.edu/calendar?event_id=14809&include_contexts=course_9696)	8am
	 Extended Essay for Glasstire: Texas Art Online (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59247)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 8, 2018	 Visit sunset sequence (https://canvas.rice.edu/calendar?event_id=14810&include_contexts=course_9696)	7pm to 9pm
Tue Mar 20, 2018	 Research Paper (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59246)	due by 10:50am
Tue Mar 27, 2018	 Research Presentation (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59245)	due by 10:50am

Thu Apr 5, 2018	 Studio Visit with Natasha Bowdoin (https://canvas.rice.edu/calendar?event_id=14811&include_contexts=course_9696)	10:50am to 12:05pm
Tue Apr 10, 2018	 Peer Editing Workshop (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59250)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Apr 12, 2018	 Yesomi Umolu lecture (https://canvas.rice.edu/calendar?event_id=14812&include_contexts=course_9696)	6pm to 8pm
Fri Apr 20, 2018	 Journal Launch (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59249)	due by 11:59pm
Wed May 2, 2018	 Art Journals (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59248)	due by 11:59pm
	 Participation (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/9696/assignments/59251)	
